

Growing Catbirds, Puns, and Family Fun

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Growing Catbirds, Puns, and Family Fun

by [09Pyros](#) [09Hydros](#)

Summary

A few changes can change everything.

The fire happens Deilos finds their name earlier, the rain comes in late and Dave falls asleep in Deilos' arms, unable to hold his finger when Deilos pokes his chubby cheek. Deilos makes the decision to return Baby Dave to his family.

Only when they do, they end up getting a fever and unable to leave the StriLondes at first.

And even when they get better, they won't let them leave.

Deilos is being threatened...

With adoption.

The next years are completely not Deilos' fault. Probably. Maybe.

Fuck it, this was going to be interesting at least.

Deilos sighs in relief as they turn away from the happy family, a strange twinge in their chest. It was easily ignored along with the way their body felt hot and uncomfortable in favor of looking towards the gate, it was time for them to leave and find a place to sleep tonight. Somewhere safe and dry away from the rain.

"Excuse me, *find* a place to sleep?" Rosaline interrupted their thoughts smoothly with a frown.

Oh, had they said that out loud? Shit.

Their vision blurs and there's alarmed voices- double shit.

Notes

I entirely blame SilentSounds from the comment section of Buff Catbird here. They're the reason why this exists.

...

And also my self restraint is practically 0% whenever a truly interesting thought comes to mind with the potential of becoming a story.

I just-

Yeah.

Have at it.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Derrick Strider breathed in quietly, though in his opinion it was a miracle to breathe with how suffocating the air was right now. There was no smoke, no smog within the car but the tension, despair and depressive atmosphere was incredibly thick, so very thick. Roxanne's little sobs and sniffs does the opposite of helping, each sound that comes out of her mouth as she cradles the most precious thing in her arms while leaning against the car window is painful to hear. But it's not her fault, none of this was her fault. Nor was it David's fault, he's not making a single noise as he's at the wheel but Derrick knows his brother is just as pained as Roxanne.

Rosaline can only provide silent comfort for her sister, she knows many words, a multitude that not many knew of but none of them could help Roxanne's quiet pain and David's silent despair. The only thing they could do was wallow in tense silence with the sharp occasional sob and sniff from the distraught mother.

The younger Strider glances at his sister-in-law, at the bundle who was surprisingly asleep through her mother's woes, though just earlier little Rose had been wailing her new lungs out and had only quietened recently, rocked into sleep as Roxanne tried to be strong for her but unfortunately as soon as Rose fell asleep her motherly persona crumbled and all she could do was quietly cry, trying not to awaken her dearly beloved daughter.

Her only living child.

They'd just been released from the custody of the numerous medical aids, doctors and firefighters a while ago. They'd just left the still smoking but no longer lit aflame hospital a while ago. Their hearts broken after interrogating the nurses that had escaped with infants in their arms- not one

of them had the one that they wanted. Not one of them had Dave Strider in their arms.

Derrick kept a steady breath, his nephew who wasn't even a month old was already gone from the world. His brother's son had died in the fire, along with others who weren't fortunate enough to escape the flames. There was another death that was concerning, the person that had helped the nurses, who had presumably died with Dave in their arms- they were gone too.

No one knew who they were, but they had apparently somehow sliced apart the door to the hospital's nursery, assisted the nurses and doctors with the other babies and had gotten to Dave last. However they'd been separated when the hospital's fire grew too out of hand within, the ceiling had collapses between them and the escapees. No one had seen them leave, so they must be one of the burnt bodies that were still being pulled out of the rubble. One of those bodies would be theirs and one of the smaller ones would be Dave's.

His fists clenched in his effort to stay calm, it helped, along with Rosaline's cautious glance his way.

This wasn't fair.

His brother had been so happy- stressed out of his mind through out the labor and the birthing, but so happy when the twins were born. Roxanne had been just as happy if not more, her laughter was bright, tired but so bright when she was given the chance to hold both of her children. Even Rosaline dropped her sarcastic and aloof nature in light of the situation, when she got to hold her niece while Derrick held his nephew.

Dave was a small baby, so small in the arms of the adults, in *his* arms. Derrick had instantly felt attached to the progeny that came from his brother's loins, he was an *uncle* to a niece and nephew!

Now... he was an uncle to only a niece.

Oh he still loved Rose, but the pain of Dave's death would never go away. Derrick knew that.

And he was just the uncle. He could only imagine what Roxanne and David were feeling.

The drive home is silent and despairing despite having one new passenger, one new family member.

It should've been two.

Davepeta- no, *Deilos*, that was their name now, they have to remember that, shivered and panted as he-they-- ah, fuck it, *he* slumped against the metal beam. Currently they were atop a metallic tower antennae that was similar to the old one back in his apartment as Dave. The one that always loomed over him on the roof and the one he had to climb to get to his kernalsprite as the game started- yeah that one.

"Waaah! Waaaaaah! Ahhhhhh!!!"

Deilos grimaced at Baby Dave's wails, the sound piercing his sensitive and superior hearing- he adjusted the small babe in his arms, rocking him steadily, awkwardly copying the motions he'd seen from nurses and various mothers, fathers, guardians that had babies. "Shhh, shhh, it's going to be okay, c'mon little dude." He whispered to him, trying to calm the baby down to the best of his abilities. To his embarrassment though, an unholy mix of Davesprite's chirps and peeps and Nepetasprite's feline-like troll purring erupted from his throat, he was mortified but miraculously it seemed that the mix somewhat caught the attention of little Baby Dave. He quietened steadily, cooing and making undeveloped baby noises that he couldn't help but find adorable, so for the sake of Dave he let himself chirp, peep and purr.

Baby Dave was appeased into calmness, clearly tired by his screaming and crying, Dave was rocked to sleep.

The ex-sprite sighed in relief when Dave finally stopped crying and fell asleep. Oh thank god. He took in a deep breath of the night's fresh air- a stark contrast to the smoke that he'd breathed in from the burning hospital. He could still see the pillar of smoke from where he was on the tower, he

shifted uncomfortably, watching the smoke rise into the clear sky with a frown.

He hated the smoke, he'd coughed so much but at least it masked his escape from the burning building along with the clouded sky. It was so dark tonight, maybe he should find a place to stay indoors, his keen instinct told him it was going to storm tonight and he needed to find shelter. He hesitated though as he looked down to the baby in his arms. What the fuck was he supposed to do with him?

Deilos should return Baby Dave to his rightful family, he technically did just kidnap him. Sure he'd saved him from the burning building but if he didn't give Dave back to his family then he'd be outright kidnapping Dave, what would he do with a baby anyway? He was homeless and had no idea how the fuck to take care of a baby.

He needed to return Baby Dave to Roxanne, to the Strilonde family, but that would mean facing her and her family. Facing the *Striders* of this reality, facing *Derrick*- Deilos took in another breath, the chilling air filling his lungs as he tried to think on what to do.

Glancing down to the sleeping baby, he reached out to poke his adorably chubby cheek. And for a moment, an *absolutely ridiculous* thought came to his mind; what if he just raised Dave on his own? He tore his eyes away from Baby Dave's sleeping face and shook his head, that was a ridiculous fucking thought. He must be exhausted- which wasn't too far off, the fire had been extremely stressful and he didn't feel one hundred percent right now. He needs to rest, just for a while. He does, attempting to comfortably sit down on the beam.

Deilos doesn't realize he's in a daze until he sneezes, shaking his head, he grimaced and he looked back to the sleeping babe in his arms, he had to do the right thing. There was something in the back of his head though, the thought was still there- but without any stimulus or reason to continue, the thought settles quickly and is easily shoved aside and so the parental instincts he possibly had was shelved as Deilos decided to return the baby.

Somehow.

...

Oh, he had an idea.

He searched through his sylladex first and swaddled Baby Dave in his warmest blanket, which was a somewhat dirty and worn lime blanket which was still fluffy thankfully though he reminded himself to clean it later. Wings manifesting from his back, he took to the air after making sure Baby Dave was warm and safe in his hands. His stomach growled, reminding him that he hasn't eaten yet in hours, he could go hunting after he made sure Baby Dave was back safe and sound with the Strider-Lalondes.

The official Strider-Lalonde House was a nice place, it was a small modern victorian manor, three wide floors, an attic and a basement. Situated in a privately owned plot of land that was bought by their money at the wealthy side of the neighborhood near the city. They had an equally big backyard and front yard, there were a few trees clustered at the side of the house edging the end of the property, a concrete wall fenced their property, tall and with the purpose of keeping outsiders out.

They had an automatic metal gate that would open for them and those they chose to let into the property. Their security system was also good, they would probably have to upgrade it, install security cameras and such but they were confident that they wouldn't have any burglars coming into the house any time soon. The fence was too high for an average person to climb on, no grooves or such to climb it, the metal gate was the same.

However the StriLondes would never expect someone to break into the property via flying.

Deilos quickly swept and glided into the property, landing on the branches of the trees nearby. He kept a neutral look on his face even though his heart pounded slightly, he had to be careful not to be seen and caught. It was risky enough to be in their property like this, in their personal property and near their house. After Derrick's suicide attempt months ago, it was agreed that they'd move to a new area, somewhere calmer for them. Which was here.

It was a steady move, that came bit by bit since they had other things going on like Roxanne's pregnancy and such, Deilos ~~stalked~~ *spied* on them a lot whenever they were out but he never did that here. Too risky, and even then they didn't really spend a lot of time in the house, the time they spent trying to settle in was interrupted with Roxanne's labor and they whisked her away to the hospital and stayed there throughout the labor and stayed nearby as the babies were cared for by the hospital in the nursery.

And look at how that turned out.

Deilos carefully descended from the tree branch, gliding down safely with Dave thankfully still asleep in his arms. He growls in annoyance as the sky decided that it was the *perfect* time to start raining, it's not that bad, but quickly he's being soaked. His wings felt uncomfortably wet but he keeps them out temporarily. He keeps Baby Dave close to him and tries to keep him as dry as possible with the use of his wings.

He glanced at the house, trying to see if there were people within the house. He couldn't see their car but that could be in the garage. Was he early? Was he late? Were they inside or not?

It didn't matter, he needed to get Baby Dave on the porch and leave, leave before the rain either worsened or maybe it'll abate. Maybe he'll leave after he rung the bell, just to make sure they get to find Baby Dave on the porch and that the poor thing doesn't spend the whole night there in the cold rainy night.

Despite spending how much time resting on the beam, he takes a shaky step forward, feeling more exhausted for some reason. He grimaces and ignores it as well as the rain in favor of forcing his legs to move towards the mansion's porch. He slinks steadily towards the mansion, making sure to stay silent though thankfully the rain also masks his wet footsteps anyway, he also tugged his hood over his head- both for the sake of trying to stay dry himself and at the fact that there should be a camera on the porch. He thinks, he's not exactly sure, but he knew there weren't cameras on the camera fences, he wasn't too sure about the manor itself, he's never been this close to it before. His uncomfortably wet wings disappear into his back

and it feels *off* and he *hates it* but he couldn't risk having his wings out and being caught by the camera.

He climbs the steps, leaving a wet trail behind him, a precious living being tucked in his arms and swaddled in two blankets to keep him warm and dry. Thankfully he was dry and the blanket was hardly wet at all. Deilos glances downwards on Baby Dave, should he take his blanket back? Hm, no, Baby Dave needed it more and he had other blankets in his sylladex, pilfered from stores. Though it was kind of sad that he'd be losing his favorite fluffy blanket. Oh well, that was okay.

Deilos rings the bell thrice before setting Baby Dave down on the doormat, snorting at it- of *course* it was a Sweet Bro and Hella Jeff themed doormat- David was just absolutely great he swore. He- fuck, now *that* didn't seem right. It was back to they then? This was so confusing, and their head was starting to hurt. The air smelled of wet grass, chilly rain and whatever flower that was nearby.

For a moment, their head swirled and they swore they were seeing something else in their eyes aside from Baby Dave on the doormat of the Strilonde manor. Fuck, when did they get on their knees? Weren't they standing just a second ago?

Deilos groaned, pressing their still gloved hands into their face, underneath their glasses and against their eyes to try and abate the migraine that was suddenly starting to plague their head. Shit, had they inhaled too much smoke? It hadn't been a problem before, or was it the chilly wet rain that clung to them and their wet wings even if they weren't out? Their head felt fuzzy and their body was warming up, or was it cooling down? Shit, they can't tell.

In their turmoil over their own body, they don't notice the fact that the gate opened and that a familiar car was coming close to the StriLonde Manor.

They were home.

Deilos doesn't notice nor hear the car stopping, but they do hear the car doors slamming close and the shout of "HEY!" coming from a certain

Strider, their usual quick reflexes are oddly missing from exhaustion, hunger, and the lethargic feeling settling in their body. But they manage to turn around on their knees, trying to tense and get ready for an encounter as the sound of rapid wet footsteps get closer, they keep Baby Dave behind them just in case they had to protect them.

But as soon as they turn, their eyes widen underneath their shades and they shrink back on themselves on instinct as the *whole StriLonde* family is right in front of them and *Derrick Strider* looks at them with suspicion and anger.

Ah fuck.

"Who the fuck are you!? You're on private property-" The currently teenaged-looking Bro started strongly, protective rage that is snuffed out by shock as Deilos shifts to the side to reveal the precious bundle on the doorstep, Baby Dave who had been awakened by Derrick's loud voice and started crying. "Holy shit, no way."

"*Waaah Waaaah WAAAH-*" The sound is grating on Deilos' ears, getting louder as Rose in the shocked Roxanne's arms wakes up and ends up crying out as well. Now there were two babies crying and it was not good for Deilos' ears. "Davey!" Roxanne wails, stumbling forward past Derrick and Deilos shuffles completely out of her way as the mother gets to her baby.

And how did she know it was her baby and not another baby? Mother's intuition perhaps, or maybe the fact that as soon as Dave was in her arms with Rose, their cries lessened until they were cooing with each other. A twin bond that couldn't be rid of no matter what, Rose would recognize her own brother even as an infant of course. How the fuck does that work? Deilos has no idea.

"It's Dave, I know, David it's *him it's my baby*." Roxanne is babbling and David Strider quickly joins his wife, helping her hold both babies in her arms, Derrick is clearly in disbelief but he gets close to look at his nephew and niece once more with a look of awe and utter relief that's shared by everyone in his family. Rosaline is about to join as well but she notices Deilos, Deilos who's at the side, leaning against a porch beam with a small

smile but trying to shrink back and be as unnoticeable as possible by the family but also dazing off a bit.

Deilos sighs in relief as they turn away from the happy family, a strange twinge in their chest. It was easily ignored along with the way their body felt hot and uncomfortable in favor of looking towards the gate, it was time for them to leave and find a place to sleep tonight. Somewhere safe and dry away from the rain.

"Excuse me, *find* a place to sleep?" Rosaline interrupted their thoughts smoothly with a frown.

Oh, had they said that out loud? Shit.

Their vision blurs and there's alarmed voices- double shit.

The mysterious stranger collapses on the porch, Rosaline catching them in her arms before they could fully collide with the ground. She's hit with the scent of wet rain and ash, she notices the dark smudges on their face which were overshadowed by strange orange shades. Behind her, she can hear her sister and brothers-in-laws voicing their panic over what happened.

"They've collapsed," She told them as Derrick comes to her side, helping her lay the hood and shaded stranger on the porch floor properly, disregarding the fact they were soaked and covered in wet ash and dirt. Derrick tugs back the hood of their hoodie and they're surprised at the colorful head of hair that their unknown had, what a daring combination of orange and lime.

Still, Rosaline puts a perfectly manicured hand over their forehead after Derrick takes the shades off as well. The pale skin of the androgynous looking stranger is flushed, and their breath is hot and heavy- their forehead is unbearably warm as well. "They have a fever."

"Get him, her? Inside." David says after a silent conversation with his wife, Roxanne nodding in agreement with determination.

Derrick glances at his brother, "We have no idea who they are and what they want-" He protested lightly, not wanting a stranger in their home.

"They brought my Davey back to me, and they have a fever. Get them inside and get a wet cloth." Roxanne exclaimed and ordered, giving her husband's brother a firm look.

He knows a losing battle when he sees one and concedes, and helps his brother take the stranger inside.

He has a funny feeling about this guy... Girl? As soon as they wake up and was coherent, he was so going to grill them for information.

And from there, the StriLonde's life changed forever.

Chapter End Notes

Like I said, I entirely blame SilentSound from Chapter 5 of Buff Catbird for this.

"It's probably kind of horrible to think of an AU of an AU (because it's an endless rabbit hole), but I can't help but imagine what life would have been like if Deilos had decided to return Dave to the Strilondes? And then, through various shenanigans, went to live with them because they were homeless (which, as the savior of a veeeeeeeeerrrrryyy rich child, wouldn't do with this family). Not to mention that they would get closer to Derrick earlier (and probably drive him crazy because Deilos has more secrets than they know what to do with lol). Yes, we would only have mini-Strilondes... unless the hospital fire happened when they were older? I don't know. Like I said, endless drop into the madness (and wonderful nature) of wonderland... truly your fault, author-san, for making such great concepts lol"

I blame them for this.

Another story for the pile!

Also first story/update of month March! Welp! Here we again!

See you all next time!

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

My habit of not leaving a story with one chapter for long persists.
Here we go.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Rosaline instructs one or either of her brothers-in-laws to take the stranger into their house- into one of the guest bedrooms. Roxanne is still enamored and emotional over Dave, who's settled down and mindlessly babbling with his beloved twin sister. Derrick decides to be the one to carry their mysterious guest while David escorts Roxanne into the house and towards the baby room, where the two of them would spend time with each other, do one final check over *both* their children and tuck them in.

For such a petite-looking stranger, they were heavy as Derrick complained lightly underneath his breath as he slung their androgynous guest over his shoulder. He would admit later on that he could feel *abs* through the wet clothes that they were wearing. Rosaline busies herself slightly, changing out of her wet clothes quickly before briskly fetching some water and a few towels.

By the time she's in the guestroom that she told Derrick to go to, she sees Derrick staring down at their guest's unshaded face with the pair of orange and green aviators in his hands. He seems hard in thought, but he notices Rosaline's arrival. "They're hot- in temperature." He says, hastily adding the last part which was curious since Rosaline would have taken the, 'they're hot' as temperature anyway. Emphasis on the temperature would just justify that Derrick found them physically attractive.

Something he obviously realize as his face colors and he scowls at her amused face. "Indeed." She says, ignoring his scowl as she sets the basin of water and towels on the nearby hairdresser and lets one of the towel soak into the water. "You might want to change out of your wet clothes Derrick,

lest you become sick like our mysterious savior." She tells him, shoos him out of the room.

He leaves without problem, grumbling as he left.

Rosaline shuts the door and turns back towards their unnamed guest on the bed. It was time to get to work, while her sister and her husband were spending time with each other and their newly reunited children and her brother-in-law was changing, possibly taking one of his legendary extended showers in the meanwhile, she would take care of the mysterious person who seemed to have save her nephew and brought them all the way to their house.

She had questions of course, the most obvious one was who were they and how did they rescue Dave? The second one was slightly answered, the information they got from the nurses and doctors a while ago had seemed so outlandish but they would or seemed to holster *some* truth to the mystery of what was happening. And she had little doubt that this was the same person that they had been describing that helped and saved the infants from the hospital's nursery. But how? How did they, 'slice apart the nursery door like butter'? And why? How did they escape that burning building with their little baby Dave?

Those were one of the questions she had, and she had numerous other ones, how did they get to their home so fast? And get past their security?

Rosaline knows that their security isn't exactly perfect but nonetheless it wouldn't be easy to sneak into the Strider-Lalonde property.

What did they want? She is not naive to think that they would do this out of the bottom of their hearts, or maybe they did, however that was still an unlikely choice. So many questions but no answers whatsoever.

However now was not the time to think or ask questions, she would receive no answers from the currently enigmatic ill ward that they took in for the moment. She had to stop thinking and focus on what mattered; nursing this sick teenager back to health. Only *then* could she extract the answers that they all wanted and needed.

Rosaline resolved herself and took the water-soaked towel out of the basin, wringing it out of the excess water, taking another dry towel and let it soak in the water before she turned back towards the bed. First thing she did was clean their ash-covered flushed face. Wiping away the ash, dirt and grime off of their face, the scent of smoke lingered and it reminded her so much of the fire. She had no doubt now that they were in the hospital as it burned. She also wiped most of the ash from their damp hair. An act of rebellion perhaps? What a curious choice of colors for dyed hair, orange and lime...

After she was finished, she frowned as she stared down at the clean face of the unknown visitor that was taking refuge in their home, on the bed with little else choice.

When she used the term 'androgynous', she really wasn't joking. Their face was a rather pretty blend of both male and female characteristics and appearance. Familiar almost, their cheekbones somewhat reminded her of David's cheekbones. However that wasn't that strange. Though she notes there were a few light scars on their face, mostly unnoticeable, and she frowns, perhaps they'd gotten into a few fights years ago? Another thing she noticed which she thought *was* strange were the sharpened canines in their mouth. Now that was uncommon, but not entirely unheard of. At least their teeth seemed healthy. For a moment she actually thinks they might be animalistic fangs but promptly throws the thought away in favor of continuing to tend to her current patient's condition.

With their face clean, she sets aside the dirty towel and takes a steady breath.

Now for the next part...

It would do no good for them to continue to wear their soaked clothing. She had to strip them.

With how out of it they were, it was easy to do that. Though she was still careful in stripping them of their bright olive hoodie and leaving them in their black t-shirt with a lime green crescent moon with what reminded her of the teeth of a cog for some reason, they barely moved, panting heavily

with their extremely flushed face. Not good, a high fever? She needed to get a thermometer as soon as she was done.

Rosaline tossed the hoodie aside, she needed to get that black shirt off of the- wait.

She paused as she catches a glimpse of something, both from the sleeves and the hem of their black shirt.

She's hesitant but she narrows her eyes in determination before gripping the hem of their shirt and *pulls up*--

Scars.

A multitude of scars, *years* old, cover the torso of the mystery teen that collapsed on the porch of her house.

Rosaline doesn't stop pulling at the shirt, carefully getting both arms out of the shirt and setting the shirt aside as she stared unashamedly at the scarred body of the teen, *a teen*, before her. How old were they? He? She? It was still hard to tell, if they were female, they had small breasts however if they were male then they had well developed pecs but they were muscular and well built despite their lithe body type, they had *abs* on them at least four- no, six?

But that wasn't what Rosaline was focused on. It was on the numerous fucking *scars* that were on their body, on their torso, chest, shoulders, biceps- they didn't go all the way towards their arm but after some looking, she could see a few thin scars on mostly unmarked parts of their forearm and hands. Hands that, underneath the curious gloves they'd been wearing, were rough with blisters and their own marks. On their knuckles, on their palms, their fingers.

She looked over each and every scar, her eyes darkening as she took in their positions and the way they were slanted. They were *intentional*, each and everyone of them. Some were light, some were dark, and- was that an *animal* bite on their side? She quickly checked, her own fingers traced the permanent dents at their side, her fingers felt delicate compared to the

fingers of the teenager before her. But yes, that was indeed an animal bite on their side- large, predatory and carnivorous.

Taking in that in, she also checked the other injuries and found that some of the slashes on their torso were in fact *claw marks*.

Her breath hitches as she sees the large scar on their stomach, and the thin but still somehow noticeable straight line on their sternum. Those were piercing marks. *Piercing* which meant-

Hastily, she turned the teenager on their stomach, they protested weakly, groaning and muttering incoherently but turn nonetheless.

Their back was just as scarred as their front, if not *more* scarred. However there was also something very eye-catching on their back. A rather beautiful tattoo of a pair of wings. They're certainly determined to keep to their colors, one wing was bright green and the other was bright orange. Both wings were tucked and had the occasional colored feather from the other wing with them on them or on the scarred skin.

But there, in the middle of their back between the two wings was a thin straight scar. The other end of the piercing mark.

Someone had stabbed, *pierced*, a blade long enough to break through their sternum. They had somehow survived. They-

Calm yourself Rosaline, she told herself. She couldn't lose herself over this. No matter how horrifying this was.

Was this abuse?

No, this was more than abuse, this could be downright *torture* as far as she was concerned.

No child should be scarred like *this*.

Rosaline grips the black shirt in her hands and takes a few calming breaths.

This was definitely added on the practical pyramid of queries, right at the very top of it in fact.

This was-

The stranger's quiet whimpers breaks her out of her thoughts that were taking themselves down a very dark road. Her silent curses cease as she leans forward when she sees their mouth open and mumble out actual cohesive but definitely incoherent words.

"..nnn...op, please? I... can' ss'rife 'nymo'e..." Their fingers grip the sheet of the bed, their flushed face contorts to pain, fear, and exhaustion. "*Plea.... I-I can't- strife-*" They hiss, it's almost feral-like as they began to weakly thrash on the bed, delirious and clearly experiencing an old memory. They claw at the bed, curling up and whimpering-

Rosaline quickly lets the shirt fall as she begins to try and calm them down, "Shhh, it's okay-" She starts, murmuring softly and trying to stop them from moving. They were exhausted and sick, just from the shoulders she's holding, she can tell that their temperature was far off from normal. Definitely a high fever, fuck. "Shhhhh, you're safe here. You're alright." She continues, and slowly, they stop moving.

Their face scrunches, pain and fear turning into unconscious confusion, "...uis?" They mutter, too soft for her to hear, was it a name? It didn't matter right now, what mattered was that they've stopped moving which was very good. "*Nnn... pounce? Mmmoommm...*" As the sister of a newly made mother, her heart twinges at the pitiful whine that they make. She's not quite sure on the 'pounce' part, but they're calling out for their mother, was their mother responsible for this? Or another relative? Or perhaps not a relative but others?

Questions, questions- she didn't have time for questions. Right now, she needed to take care of this poor teen in the bed.

She rolls them on their back, shushing them when they tried to move. She had to finish the strip, the pants were still damp after all, and those shoes definitely had to come off.

The dark-lavender eyed woman makes a mental note to search for their clothing properly later on and launder them because they'd been soaked with rain water and covered with ash before that.

Rosaline steps back from the bed, eyeing the mysterious *girl* on the bed. Yes, they were a girl considering that the lack of a bulge at the crotch. Though, she perhaps considered herself a boy considering the fact they were wearing fitting *boxers*? Ugh, this was too confusing but Rosaline would simply call her, 'her' until she confirmed or denied anything when she inevitably awoke. Rosaline definitely wasn't going to take the pair of underwear off, thankfully they weren't damp at all and could be left on. Though it was curious that she forewent a matching bra or maybe even a sports bra... but then again her breasts were quite small and flat but quite muscular, could be mistaken as a pair of male pecs perhaps.

She took the second wet towel from earlier and wrung it slightly before folding it and laying the damp towel on the teenage girl's forehead. Afterwards, she properly tucked the poor girl under the covers of the bed.

Oh, she was muttering aloud cohesive words again.

"...*'m sorry- I-I'm sorry... so weak... ple-ase...*" Abruptly they break out into coughs and Rosaline cringes, this might be worse than she thought. And she was talking about a lot of things.

Rosaline sighs and takes in a deep breath, determination setting in her eyes. "Don't worry, you'll be okay here." She reassures her, however fruitless it was because the teenager was unconscious and couldn't possibly hear her. She said it aloud nonetheless though, because she knows that her family would find out what happened and decide on what to do when this was all over and hopefully, everything would lead towards the better.

For now though, she needed to nurse this poor girl back to optimal health.

Nepeta took in heavy breaths, trying to get air back in his lungs as he sprawled on his back on the hot asphalt of the roof's ground with adrenaline and terror laced in his veins. The earthen sun bore down on him in waves

and his blood was drying quickly, caking and crusting around his injuries and staining his clothes.

She blinks beneath her shades, the only thing shielding her sight from the unruly bright sun of the planet- no, it wasn't the shades that were shielding her from Alternia's deathly sunshine but the treetops, the leaves of the forest that protected her from it all, the blood of her prey soaking her gloves and her clothing. Dave takes in calming breaths for her adrenaline and thrill shot body that laid on the forest floor.

Her sight swirled, his breath hitched, footsteps came steadily. A pair of shoes. A quartet of paws.

The sound of a predatory growl comforts her.

The sound of a metal blade terrifies him.

Bro dies underneath the rubble of their cave.

Pounce dies with a sword through the chest by Jack Noir.

She smiles freely with her emotions on her sleeve - He can't afford to show his emotions at all.

Dave is heartbroken by the death of his moirail. His name was Equius.

Nepeta is heartbroken by the death of her best friend. His name was John.

Dave spends months in a doomed timeline with his sister, the cackling laughter of Calsprite haunts him. He tries to make the most of it.

Nepeta spends weeks on a doomed meteor with her friends, the threat of a omnipotent dog haunts her. She tries to make the most of it.

Nepeta dies to try and take vengeance when she could have lived had she ran away, she would never do that.

Dave lives to uphold the timeline but he should've died after all, he wished he did sometimes.

She feels like the extra, John and Jade are better off without her.

He feels like the third, Karkat would never look his way with Terezi around.

Knight of Heart.

Rouge of Time.

She, He, They.

Dave and Nepeta.

Davepeta.

Deilos.

Together they were a new being, a new person, time for a new life where they could be happy.

Derrick frowned as he returned to the room that Rosaline had chosen for their new wayward 'guest'.

The youngest Strider brother didn't really know on what to think of them, how more suspicious someone could be? Appearing out of nowhere right at *their* porch with the baby they just thought they'd lost? They were after something, that was much clear. Or so he was persistent to think of anyway. Why else would they return little Davey at their house? Why not at the hospital? Which also brought the question on *how the fuck* they managed to escape the burning building without anyone knowing about it. They were a fucking teen, maybe just a few years younger than him.

Derrick opened the door just in time to Rosaline sitting down at a nearby chair by the bedside table, looking tired but was looking at the bedridden teen with an intense look. "How are they?" He asked, leaning against the doorway.

His sister-in-law smiles a strained smile, "Better, their temperature is dangerously high but we should be able to bring it down safely and nurse

her back to health with no problem." She says and oh, they were a girl then? The thought must have shown on his face because Rosaline gives him a look, "I presume they're female, they lack the necessary genitals for a male but I wouldn't be that presumptuous, I only refer her as 'her' for the moment because of that. If she wishes to correct me then I will adapt."

Ah, he got it.

The Strider and Lalonde families weren't that normal, but at least they accepted things that most other people wouldn't.

Like gender and sexuality shit, but that hardly mattered right now.

So until further notice, 'she' it was.

"Anything else to note?" He asks because he doubts that it was just that that would cause such strain on Rosaline's face, the strain was actually noticeable to those who didn't know her. Which was concerning really.

Rosaline grimaces, okay not that good to note then, "I... am hesitant to say." She admits, glancing back to the mysterious little 'lady' on the bed. Who hardly seemed like a lady, previously dressed in a lime hoodie and cargo pants, not to mention those abs she had that he could feel through the wet cloth- impressive for her presumable age. And her face was androgynous, with some work, someone could really mistake her as a guy. Maybe that was the point. At any rate though, the fact she was having Rosaline be hesitant and grimacing, something must be going on.

"If she has a high fever then should we be calling for a doctor?" Derrick points out as he enters the room, sitting down at the edge of the bed because there wasn't another chair in the room. "I'd say get her to a hospital but obviously we can't, not now anyway." The hospital that was nearby was currently an area of wet smoldering ash and ruin. And he didn't feel like going out a second time that night to another hospital, he has a good feeling that his brother felt the same.

Rosaline gives a dry smile, "I shall call for a doctor when we actually need one," She says, a perfectly pedicured purple nail taps on the table, "But I

have a feeling that she wouldn't like a doctor looking her over... Derrick, would you be able to find out about her and her origins?" She suddenly asks after a moment of silence as they both look at the enigmatic girl tucked into a luxurious bed with a wet towel draped on her forehead.

Derrick paused, "Do you even need to ask? You know I was going to do it anyway." He didn't trust her, so of course he was going to attempt to find out anything he could about her. He'd take her picture, search on what he could about her and make sure that she wasn't going to be a thorn or even a threat to his family. He'll admit that she may have earned some good Samaritan points for returning his nephew here but the fact that she was even here and had him in the first place had his guard up.

He had to be, since his brother was too soft and would no doubt do what he can to repay this girl for what she's done, David and Roxanne both. It was up to him and Rosaline to be the bad cops here.

"Good... tell me when you do Derrick, maybe whatever you find can tell us why she looks more of a hardened warrior underneath her clothing than a typical tenacious youth." Rosaline says softly and Derrick's spine straightens at the statement.

'Hardened warrior'?

Did she have scars?

How many?

What kind?

He bites his tongue on those questions, not yet. Don't ask yet. Rosaline looked tired, he could ask when she was well rested. "Go sleep sis, you look like you need it." Derrick says blithely.

She smirks at him, "As do you. The shower must have helped though." She replies just as blithely and he returns the smirk.

They banter a bit before Derrick finally convinces her to go at least shower, wouldn't want her to get sick as well.

That leaves him alone with the unconscious girl in the room.

He looks at her, at the faint but now noticeable scars on her face, at the way her hair is dyed with lime and orange highlights, at the way her eyes are shut and how they clench from time to time.

She seems familiar. Had Derrick seen her by chance before?

...

He can't recall.

Derrick sighs, about to lean back and away from her- it was kind of weird for him to be leaning over her like this huh? Kind of creepy actually. But before he could completely lean away, he hears the faint delirious and trembling voice.

"...ro.... Bro-no plea.... no nononono-"

Derrick grimaces and leans away, so it really was domestic abuse then? Also her accent, was it his imagine or did he hear some southern accent there? Texan maybe?

Just more questions to add into the pile.

He would just have to wait until she got better.

Which might take a while.

Rosaline sighs as she nurses a cup of coffee, she'd just finished her shower and had been in the mood for something warm on this rainy night.

She's not surprised when she's joined by her sister, her husband and Derrick soon afterwards. Roxanne and David look curious and concerned, Derrick looks wary but curious as well. Clearly they want to know what she thought

and found out about their currently unconscious and ill Dave savior on the second floor guest room.

Well who was she to deny them what she found?

Still, they wouldn't like what she found- she certainly hadn't.

Chapter End Notes

And thus we're back to the irregular updating schedule that I don't have.

Hope you enjoyed!

See you next chapter! Of any story!

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

its been a while
sorry for the long ass wait, i took a personal month off from writing
because i felt burnt out
i think i feel better but i'm not sure. my updates might still be as slow
as before but at least i won't have as much trouble of writing them or
have troubled thoughts about writing them.
in any case, unto the chapter
i hope you'll enjoy
and yes, feverish deilos is peak dumbass. we love them nonetheless.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Their sibling is both elated and disappointed in their being, it doesn't sting, not a bit since the disappointment disappears and leaves elation at their merging. They feel better than ever before, Dave more so than Nepeta who sympathizes with him within their newly merged mindscape.

Jasprose doesn't stay long, but neither do they.

There's a prophecy out there, about a hero of time going against a monster. It probably doesn't pertain to them persay, but they had the confidence now to face one of the biggest monsters out there.

Lord English.

He would feel their claws and pay for the actions he did.

For what he did to Bro.

For what he did to her dead friends.

Together, they'd face him.

And if they died- well, they did their best.

They wouldn't go without a good damn fight though.

It's been an emotional night for everyone involved, and honestly, Roxanne wanted to pass out on her bed with her husband already. But she couldn't do that, she and D were too curious for their own good for their newest house guest. The mysterious teenager that managed to bypass their security seemingly to just deliver her precious baby back to them. That was already a great big fat good point for them in her books, but she wasn't stupid nor naive. They probably had an agenda in mind. Though it was deferred with the fact they had collapsed on the porch from what looks like a high fever.

She wondered on what the demand or agenda would be, and though she was very thankful to the stranger for bringing back her beloved baby Dave- she wasn't naive nor stupid. She had several PhDs, doctorates, she was one of the smartest women in the world for fuck's sake. She was definitely grateful, but she wasn't going to let the stranger demand anything too outlandish from her and her family.

Anything that put her herself and her family in possible danger or disarray was off of the fucking table.

Other than that? She was near-ready to give the stranger almost anything they wanted. Almost anything.

However, as it was established already. Their wayward savior was ill and was unconscious in one of their guest rooms right now and couldn't ask for anything, so the only thing that Roxanne could do with anything relating to the stranger was ask her sister and brother-in-law for information about them, mostly on her sister since it seemed that she took complete charge over their wellbeing. What did they look like, what did they seem like from their clothing, etc.

She would listen to their theories, try to think ahead and keep in mind several things to make sure that in the end that everyone was satisfied and happy.

So, after silently crying with her husband over their newly returned baby boy, tucking both him and his twin sister into their new cribs, crying some more in the baby room because she had both babies again, her family was complete- she and David wiped their eyes and crept out of the room after rocking both babies to sleep.

Before they headed down, they went to shower and change, they'd rather not end up sick like their wayward savior who was currently trapped, unconscious and probably incoherent in bed. Yeah, they'd want to avoid that.

Afterwards, Roxanne and David find Rosaline nursing a coffee cup in the kitchen, sitting at the counter. They both join her and not long afterwards, Derrick joins them as well, the family was together. Fully together. Complete. Her children were tucked and asleep upstairs and the day was wearing all of them down, but once again, Roxanne was adamant to find out pertinent information about the stranger occupying a room within their house.

She wasn't expecting a lot yet, the most important questions of 'how' and 'why' would be left unanswered until they woke up. But for now, Roxanne would be satisfied to find out something about them.

"So sis," Roxanne starts, leaning against the counter and taking a seat besides her beloved sister, "Spill the deets. What'cha think?" She questions casually.

David, her beloved hubby and one of the greatest men to exist, doesn't sit beside her at the counter. Instead, he sees Rosaline's cup and must have felt jealous and also generous because he walks into the kitchen to get mugs and pour the rest of them coffee. The sweetheart. He also makes sure it was up to their tastes; Derrick usually took his coffee like a wuss with a healthy amount of cream and sugar in it, unless he was up to work on a project late into the night. She respected sleep-deprived Derrick who thrived on creamless coffee like her.

Roxanne on the other hand was a strong ass woman who didn't need no cream in her coffee. She took it straight and black. Maybe add in some

sugar to truly sweeten the deal. She only took cream and other things whenever she wanted to relax.

David was half and half, but that was okay because he was sweet enough nonetheless.

Roxanne really appreciates the action of her husband providing coffee because she was mentally getting off track, accepting the steaming neon pink mug with little black cats stamped all over offered to her and smiling sweetly at David. Rewarding him with a sweet kiss to the cheek. Derrick gladly takes his orange C-UNT mug while David settles with his red horribly printed Jeff mug.

She loved her husband, she really did, but she wondered sometimes about his tastes. Only sometimes because Sweet Bro and Hella Jeff was an absolute masterpiece of a shitty series and she wouldn't have it any other way. If her husband found joy in his weird tastes and nothing truly bad happened then who was she to judge on it? It was one of her husband's ways of income anyway.

Rosaline, her dear sister, waited for them all to attain their coffee before she finally answered her question. "Before I indulge and answer your question, I'd like to remind you that these are mostly my thoughts and I have no actual legitimate answer to everything that involves our newest tenant and savior." She starts with a grave look on her face, her dark lavender eyes look troubled and that alone has Roxanne's spine straightening to hear everything properly.

She already doesn't like whatever's coming her way.

"For one, we still don't know about her identity." Rosaline starts, and oh? Their savior was a girl? Her sister continues, "She has no ID that we found on her, no personal items within her clothing aside from that. Said clothing were rather old, even underneath the wet soot and ash they seemed rather dirty." No ID or personal items? A runaway maybe? Roxanne breathes lightly at the mention of soot and ash.

The hospital was gone. The smoldering remains would no doubt be doused by the rain by now.

At least it was a physical testament that somehow this, girl? Had actually been there and rescued her baby. Not that she really doubted it, but she still had to wonder how the hell she got out of the hospital without anyone knowing.

Derrick interrupts Rosaline, "I'll be looking her up as soon as I can. Probably tonii-tomorrow." He trailed off before quickly changing his words once he caught sight of his brother's pointed and firm look. They were all tired, and in need of a good night's sleep. David would probably want Dirk to sleep tonight rather than look up the identity of the stranger in one of their rooms. Roxanne and Rosaline backed him up, which is why Derrick backed down so quickly.

He could've argued with his brother, but with all three of them ganging up on him he had no choice but to comply. "Tomorrow, I'll look out for her identity." He seems disappointed, good, he needed to sleep tonight just like them.

"Good." Rosaline nodded, either at the fact Derrick would check tomorrow or he'd sleep tonight. Or both, it was probably both. "Finding out more about her and her situation would benefit everyone, even if she probably wouldn't approve of us finding out what happened to her in the past." Oh Roxanne did not like what she said nor the way she said it. It implied... a lot of things from her sister.

"Rosie..."

Rosaline gives her a subdued and grim look, "Roxanne, she has scars. All over her body. Purposefully inflicted as far as I can see by a second or even third party."

Was their guest an abused runaway?

The thought of someone, be it a guardian, family, not family or just anyone abusing and hurting a kid- she looked around to be Derrick's age. How long

ago did it start? Was it from the start? Did her parents know? Were her parents part of it?

Roxanne grips her mug tightly, she can't comprehend it. The thought of hurting her own children or family... It made her far more sick than the worst illness she's ever had. It made her want to vomit more than either food poisoning or her own morning sickness, which had been horrible. But at least she didn't regret it, she loved her babies. Her dearest Rose and Dave.

And if D had been the one to abuse them- she'd destroy his ass. Not that she would have to, she was very sure that D would never raise his hand against a child, he had raised Derrick after their parents died. And though he'd been a big neglective into Derrick's teenage age due to work and... romantic endeavors, he was still there, he still loved his brother and had been so distraught when Derrick admitted he had tried to- when Derrick tried to jump off a goddamn bridge because of his own growing depression, the only time he ever had been violent or physical was in the emotional event of slapping Derrick- something he very much regretted immediately afterwards. He had blamed himself, crying his eyes out on her shoulder when it was just the both of them or on Rosaline's shoulder when Roxanne went to confront Derrick after her sister did.

They were family, they were close, they would never purposefully hurt each other. Ever.

Just the thought of it...

"Rox." D's quiet voice snaps her out of her thoughts, "Let up your grip, you're going to end up breaking your cup." Warm hands encompass hers, her coffee had long cooled down so the warmth was a welcomed thing. It brought comfort to her along with D's look of understanding.

Her husband was amazing.

Roxanne took in a deep breath and gave him a smile, loosening her hold on her mug as she leaned into D's embrace. "Right, yeah." She murmured, smiling as D ran a gentle hand through her hair. What a softie.

"Now what?" Derrick questioned, glancing between his brother and his wife to her sister.

Rosaline sighed, rubbing her face tiredly. "Now I suppose, we sleep. It is very late and it's been... an eventful evening to say the least." She said dryly, making them all snort. 'Eventful' was a definite understatement.

From losing one of their newest family in a sudden hospital fire, the brief crushing loss, the suffocating ride back home, finding a stranger on their porch- a sick stranger on their porch along with their previously thought dead baby-

Understatement indeed.

"Sleep sounds wonderful." Roxanne murmured though she reached over to bop Derrick on the head, she smirked at his indignant look, "Don't look at me like that Derrick- it's a warning for you to actually sleep tonight. Straight to sleep. Don't make me drag you to bed with D and I." She threatened, taking in delight at Derrick's embarrassment and D's fond exasperation. Rosaline hid her smile in her cup.

Annoyed, Derrick could only nod back at his sister-in-law. "Fine. Whatever, no internet excursions tonight for me. Not like we need to know the identity of the actual stranger in our house as soon as possible." He muttered, definitely not sulking.

"Said stranger is sick Derrick. Barely able to do anything. I doubt she will even be able to wake up tonight whatsoever. At the very least, she might wake up tomorrow when we're all awake. You can find out about her identity in the morning." Rosaline told him, standing from her seat and picking up her now empty cup. "Sleep is something we all require at the moment, you especially sister." She plucked her sister's cup from her hands, regardless if the cup was empty or not.

Roxanne huffed but didn't complain, "I know, I know. I feel exhausted." She really did. Crying took a lot of you. And it was really late too.

"We all do." D agreed, leaning over to kiss her cheek. "C'mon Rox, let's get you to bed."

"I'll take this." Derrick took D's mug, nodding back to D's thankful nod as his older brother escorted his wife towards their room to rest. He joined Rosaline in the kitchen to put his and his brother's cup into the sink.

Rosaline hummed, filling the cups with soapy water. "You heard my sister, no staying up at the computer. Straight to bed."

"I said fine- fuck. Nothing passes you huh Rosa?"

"I am simply just that talented Derrick. Now, off you go. Straight to sleep."

She watched him leave the kitchen, grumbling underneath his breath with each step he took. It was amusing to watch, the young man could act all mature and adult he wanted, moments like these really showed his inner childishness. But at least he could hide it better than D, who could barely hide it most of the time.

D wouldn't hesitate to complain or pout childishly if she or her sister rightfully teased or chided him in something light-hearted. It was endearing.

Shaking her head, Rosaline took only a few minutes to scrub the cups clean and leave them out to dry throughout the night. Leaving for her own room to tuck in and sleep.

Of course she briefly stopped by the guestroom which housed their still unconscious guest. She checked her temperature, still worryingly high, but not to the point of true alarm. At the very least, she could survive the night even if the rest of them slept. The mystery girl shifted from underneath the covers, face unnaturally flushed and hot, her mouth set into a firm frown.

For someone around Derrick's age, she both seemed so much older yet younger at that very moment. Breathless mutters occasionally escaping her lips as her mind conjured whatever dreams from the depths of her mind in the state of her feverishness. Rosaline frowned as an actual whimper

managed to breach through her pursed lips. She had to wonder just what the young lady was dreaming about for that to happen, whatever it was, it was obviously something bad.

Briefly, Rosaline thought to herself, what would happen after she woke up? Sure they would ask her all the questions they wanted, however the fact remained that this girl was obviously not in a good situation. And for some reason Rosaline didn't like the thought of sending her away on her own, even the thought of contacting authorities made her hesitate as she herself knew what it was like to be mishandled by Child Protective Services- she and her sister both.

She was rather hesitant to subject the young teen to something like that, but no doubt even if she did, she just knew that the young woman would run at first opportunity. Flee from whatever she perceived as dangerous or harmful to her person which Rosaline didn't like but ultimately understood.

There was no use to thinking about it right now though, Rosaline told herself as she adjusted the blankets on the sleeping teen's figure, wiping the sweat from her face with a damp cloth and replacing the towel on her brow with a new one. Mystery girl leaned into her palm when Rosaline gently combed her fingers through her wet hair, seemingly calmed down by the touch.

"Goodnight." Rosaline whispered to her before finally leaving the bedside and out of the room towards her own.

The Strider-Lalonde House was finally silent as all the occupants were fast asleep.

The world was muted and blurry each time they woke up, though they wouldn't remember a few of those times. Always drifting back into sleep at some point, the longest they'd been awake would probably have been a few minutes at best before their consciousness dipped back down.

A few times, they'd see blurred figures in their limited visions, eyes squinting and straining. Though it could have been just one for all they

knew, or more, they weren't really sure.

They drifted in and out, but gradually, the heat and uncomfortable feeling they felt seemed to lessen. Always helped by comforting cool hands and towels, occasionally they'd hear a small whisper or two, though it was muffled from the heat and fuzz in their head.

While unconscious, they dreamt of the past of both their lives. As individuals, as Nepeta and Dave. They weren't really aware of everything, but sometimes they would briefly notice that details would either be missing, replaced or swapped.

Nepeta never owned a sword that they were sure, and Dave never ate raw meat before.

Bro's face didn't have two mouths, and Pouce couldn't flash step.

Through the haze of the fever, there'd be moments of clarity, they'd realize they were actually *tucked* in a *bed*. Something they've rarely ever slept in. But the clarity would pass and they'd just sink back into the comfort the bed provided on their tired, sick body.

Eventually, the stuffy feeling in their chest receded enough that breathing was a bit easier. Their temperature improved and it didn't feel paradoxically hot and cold at the same time. Their mind cleared from the fuzz just enough for them to be able to stay awake more than just a few minutes.

Which leads to their present moment.

Deilos' mouth felt unbelievably dry as they woke up, mind feeling foggy and their focus wavering ever so slightly but they felt better than they did after passing out. And though they felt exhausted, they felt energized enough to feel stubborn and try to avoid the urge of immediately going back to sleep.

Huffing, they shifted in the bed, tiredly fighting off the covers and forcing themselves to sit up. Through squinted eyes and blurry vision, they looked around tiredly. They... had no idea where the fuck they were. "Wh-" They

coughed, groaning as the dryness of their throat grew more and more unbearable.

Luckily, there was a cup of water by the bed on the drawer. And were those their shades?

Yoink.

They took their shades back first and foremost, it took a few tries with them trying to stretch over but still stay on the bed, after that they finally took the cup of water next. There was even a pitcher next to the cup, how nice. They had to wonder who put that there, they were nice people whoever they were.

After almost choking on the liquid for drinking too fast, they set the cup back down while coughing. The dry feeling in their throat disappeared, replaced with slight pain from coughing so much.

'Fuck this is such bullshit. I don't remember being this sick ever.' Deilos thought grimacing while wiping their mouth with one hand while the other was gently pressed against their throat. Both Nepeta and Dave had gotten sick before yeah, but it was mostly just colds, slight fevers, the occasional infected wound- those sucked ass but a high fever was something both had avoided thankfully.

Which still very much sucked for *Deilos* who got to experience it now. Oh joy.

Deilos carefully sucked in a few breaths, calming down and trying not to break into another coughing fit.

It was then that they noticed the fact they weren't wearing their original clothes. The fact their shades had been on the bedside drawer should have been one blaring clue that they should have immediately noticed.

Deilos eyed over their new clothes and tugged the front of the light purple shirt they were currently wearing, it was loose on them, meant for someone

larger than them- an adult probably. They were also wearing pink shorts! They were cute as hell but not really their style.

Pink and light purple...

The former sprite felt some dread as they took in the colors of their new clothing before looking around the room.

While they weren't sure on where exactly they were, they had inkling, a *bad* inkling to where they were. The last thing they remembered before passing out was...

"Fuck. *Fuck* ." They swore, ignoring the twinge of pain from their throat.

They were in the StriLonde house weren't they?

Shit- they *never* wanted to be in-

Ignoring the urge to just go back to sleep because they felt *tired* and they were still obviously *sick* , Deilos threw their legs over the edge of the bed, firmly setting them on the light red rug on the floor. They pushed against the bed, standing-

Only to immediately waver, staggering in place. "*Shit* ." They hissed, feeling light-headed. Their limbs felt so *weak* - they fucking *despised* that feeling.

~~It reminded them of how weak they were before. Has anything even changed?~~

With gritted teeth, they used the bedside table as a brief crutch as they recuperated. Trying to stay upright, they took a few tentative steps forward, looking around for their clothing- they took almost *everything* .

Well, almost.

They still had their sylladex, however they couldn't really use it at the moment. Not with how blurry their vision was and how uncoordinated they were right now. It was best to save it as a last resort.

Not to mention they still wanted to get their original clothing back, especially their gloves.

~~Her claws. Their claws. They felt naked without them on. At least their sword was snug in their scabbards, but their gloves belonged on their hands.~~

The only thing of theirs within the room was their shades, which was good because at *least* they had *that* . They couldn't bear to think of not being able to wear their shades- *their last form of protection*.

Where? Where could they be? They had to be somewhere else within the house...

Had they put anything in their clothes that was particularly important or gave away to who they were? No, they always kept important shit in their sylladex. And they couldn't just try and find out where their other clothes were, that'd be too much work and take too much time.

The best bet they had was to get out.

Yeah, get out of the house and go somewhere more secluded. They could get better somewhere else, alone.

To Deilos, that sounded like a genuinely good idea. They didn't really need anyone else, sure they were sick but they could by this. They couldn't be defeated by something like a *fever* - they weren't even supposed to be in this damn house anyway!

Taking in a steady deep breath, they trudged towards the nearest window with the full intentions of leaving and hopefully *never* coming back. At least not this close.

Their body was so tired and ached, but if they focused, they could get out of the house through the window just fine right?

Tough luck for them when the window turned out to be locked and not easily opened. “ *Seriously?!* ” They groaned, briefly setting their forehead against the cool glass- oh that felt *really* nice... But they couldn't stay here.

Breaking the window would be too much hassle, and they didn't want to risk hurting themselves physically at the moment, it was bad enough they were sick. So with the window plan out the proverbial window... that left the door.

Deilos pushed against the window and stumbled over to the door, ignoring the growing blurriness of their vision as well as the mounting headache- they felt exhausted, nauseated and everything felt either too cold or too hot. But they really couldn't stay here. It wasn't- they just couldn't.

~~Home. Home. It wasn't home. Where was home?~~

Thankfully, the door wasn't locked and even if it was, it would've been easily unlocked. Fumbling with the doorknob and feeling shittier by the minute, they pried the door open, wincing at the grating noise of it opening- that door needed oil.

Their senses felt so muddled- they hated it to the extreme. In the future they'd do their best to avoid getting sick again. At least they wouldn't get sick in this type of situation, in someone else's fucking *hive* . House. Fucking house.

Looking into the hallway, Deilos squinted through the tinted lens of their shades. No one in the hallway at least- that was good. They padded carefully on the carpet, trying to stay quiet and to keep up straight. If they had to use the wall as support, well no one had to know.

They went to the nearest window, checking and- *bingo*.

It was unlocked. And even better, it was open.

As quickly as they could without summoning a coughing fit or a nauseous wave, they got to the window, tentatively looking out to check a few things- yep, second floor of the StriLonde Manor. They couldn't tell if it was morning or afternoon, their usually impeccable sense of time was just as muddled as the rest of their mind and senses. But they couldn't see anyone outside. And look, freedom was so close. They could just- jump out. They'd

be fine in landing, or maybe even flying. Whichever came first. They just had to get out of here.

With that goal in their head, they struggled to climb. Fuck did their limbs feel like shit. They felt like total, utter, shit.

If their mind and senses were a bit clearer, then they would've instantly noticed the fact that one certain Strider had come out of his room and was stunned to see a certain guest of his struggling to climb onto the window sill. When they were still clearly sick. And dressed loosely in both of his sisters-in-laws under-clothes.

“Holy *shit* what the ***fuck do you think you're doing?!*** ”

Deilos had only managed to hook on leg over the sill, trying to straddle the window when they heard the sudden scream from *nowhere* - “*Gah-*” They yelped, losing the already weak grip they had and falling off the window sill. Thankfully *inside* rather than outside.

Seeing the strange but *still sick* girl fall from the window nearly gave Derrick a heart-attack! Thankfully she didn't fall the wrong way out the fucking window. Seriously, what the fuck was she thinking? Probably not straight because of that fever of hers but seriously! Who thought of going out the window when they sick?!

They landed roughly on their side, wheezing with pain as their thankfully sturdy shades dug into the side of their face. “Owww -” They whined, the headache in their head spiked and their already shitty body felt even shittier and now in actual *pain* . No, they'd been so close-

Derrick winced and immediately scrambled to the girl's side, feeling their temperature and making sure they were alright- they were definitely still sick and shouldn't be even walking around! Even without the attempted window jumping! Which he still was quite hung up on.

Oh hello cold fingers you feel nice. Deilos thought to themselves faintly with some delirium as they were suddenly touched by *someone* . “Oh my fucking god what were you even *thinking* you're still sick as fuck and-”

Who was talking? Deilos didn't know them, it was a *stranger stranger stranger danger* - Their protective instincts *finally* kicked and with a hazy head, Deilos followed without question, their coherence bobbing in and out. They bit him, hard enough to draw blood. "OW! Did you just fucking bite me?! Shit- you even drew blood- how sharp are your fucking teeth?!"

Hiisssssss

"What the hell?!"

"I hear shouting! Derrick dearie, what's going on?!"

"The girl's awake and she's hissing at me!!"

Deilos' head throbbed and quite honestly, they felt close to passing out. They couldn't focus clearly, but strangely they were able to latch onto the last loud sentence. "*Not a girl right now shits for brains!*" They moved their arm and-

Later on after *more* than a stressful few minutes, with Deilos now firmly tucked back into bed, would Deilos realize what just happened.

They'd tried to escape. Derrick Strider caught them escaping. They bit Derrick's hand, hissed at him and even *slapped his fucking face*.

"Ah *furrick* ." They muttered with some tired hysteria as *Roxanne Strider-Lalonde* wiped their sweaty brow while a sulking Derrick holding a bruising cheek, watched from the doorway.

Deilos really wished this was all just one bad dream. And for a moment, they'd believe it- until they actually woke up a bit more coherently and were faced with *Rosaline Lalonde* and *David Strider* .

"Furrick ."

Chapter End Notes

i am slowly going back into the works. hopefully i'll be able to get back to writing on a more regular basis.

i am feeling better, the burn out feeling is gone i think but i'm still not sure about everything.

but hey! i'm hoping that with this updated, i'll be able to snowball into productivity.

did that make sense? no? yes?

at any rate, i hope you enjoyed the chapter. i still have no update schedule but i'm planning to update this month

and also happy start of october guys, its spooky season!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!